Special 8-Page Issue Documenting The Tonkin Gulf Fraud

McNamara and The Right to Lie

"The Secretary . . . has kept secret important communications from the task force that indicated doubt about the reported attack on Aug. 4. . . . Secretary McNamara's statement is a classic example of selective declassification. . . . . Security classification is intended to protect the nation from an enemy, not . . . one branch of government against another or the public, nor to protect the American people from knowledge of mistakes. I do not accept as valid the view of Mr. Arthur Sylvester, the former press officer of the Pentagon, that the Government has a right to lie to the people of this country."

—Chm. Fulbright of Senate Foreign Relations Feb. 21

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All We Really Know Is That We Fired The First Shots

A major, if inadvertent, revelation in McNamara's new testimony on the Tonkin Gulf affair has been overlooked. If there was indeed an attack involving two U.S. destroyers on the night of Aug. 4, 1964, we began the attack, we opened fire first. Indeed the only shots we are completely sure of beyond any shadow of doubt even at this late date are those which came from our own vessels. McNamara's new version of the attack contradicts the melodramatic account he gave four years ago, two days after the incident, behind the closed doors of a joint executive session of the Senate's Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees. It was this graphic, but (as it now appears) untrue version which helped stampede the Senate into voting the Tonkin Gulf resolution.

A Mendacious Melodrama

That earlier testimony was given Aug. 6, 1964. When the transcript of that hearing is now compared with the new one held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, one can begin to get some idea of the full dimensions of the mendacity by which the Johnson Administration obtained that resolution which was its blank check for war in Southeast Asia. "The attack," McNamara told the Senate committees four years ago, "occurred at night. It appeared to be a deliberate attack in the nature of an ambush. Torpedoes were launched, automatic weapons fire was directed against the vessels [the Maddox and the Turner Joy]. *They returned the fire.*" (Our italics.)

The Secretary put it even more vividly when Senator Lausche asked him, "Do you know how many of the torpedoes were set in motion and what small arms were used?"

Secretary McNamara. It is difficult to estimate. This was a very dark night. The attack was carried out during the night, the hours of darkness. It was a premeditated attack, a pre-planned attack. It was described as an ambush in the reports from the commanders, but because it was night it is very difficult to estimate the total amount of fire.

Senator Lausche: The shots were again initiated by the North Vietnamese?

Secretary McNamara: Yes.

General Wheeler: That is correct.

Thus was drawn a picture of "unprovoked aggression." It was magnified and emotionalized by President Johnson when he went on TV after the attack and declared "This new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us in the United States the importance of the struggle for peace and security in Southeast Asia." This was echoed in the same high dramatic vein by Adlai Stevenson at the UN Security Council next day: "Without any shadow of doubt . . . planned deliberate military aggression against vessels lawfully present in international waters" was Stevenson's description. The rhetoric made it sound like a new Pearl Harbor.

But when McNamara appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a few days ago on Feb. 20 he knew that the Committee had in its possession documents from Defense Department files which cast doubt on every aspect of that earlier version. He had to tone down his own presentation to fit. So in his prepared statement, as given out to the press that day, he gave a very different picture from that drawn four years ago.

"At about 9:39 p.m.," McNamara now related, "both Maddox and Turner opened fire on the approaching craft *when it was evident from their maneuvers* [our italics—not from any shots but from their maneuvers] that they were pressing in for attack positions. At about this time, the boats were at a range of 6,000 yards from Maddox when the radar tracking indicated *that the contact had turned away and begun to open in range* [our italics]. Torpedo noises were then heard by the Maddox's sonar. A report of the torpedo noise was immediately passed to the Turner Joy

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A Record of Dishonor

"Our Navy played absolutely no part in, was not associated with, was not aware of, any South Vietnamese actions [attacking North Vietnam] if there were any."

McNamara to Senate Foreign Relations Aug. 6, 1964

"Higher naval commands were made aware of the [commando] operations [against North Vietnamese coastal installations] by Commander U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, in order to avoid mutual interference or confusion between our patrols and those operations." *

—McNamara to Foreign Relations Feb. 20, 1968. The two passages were quoted in Morse's speech in the Senate Feb. 21 (see our pages 6, 7 and 8).

* Or, could it have been, to coordinate them?

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(Continued from Page One)

by inter-ship radio and both ships took evasive action to avoid the torpedo. A torpedo wake was then sighted passing abeam Turner Joy from after to forward.

Even this scaled down version was still a deceptive picture of what actually had transpired. McNamara released his statement during the noon recess of the Feb. 20 hearing, which was held behind closed doors. He thus jumped the gun on the committee by getting his version out first, perhaps hoping that it might be some time before the Committee could publish the full transcript.* Fortunately Senator Morse, to whom the country owes so much in this whole affair, courageously defied security regulations and in a Senate speech next day (see pages 6, 7 and 8) made public much of the intramural Pentagon messages obtained by the Committee. This and the Committee's anger over McNamara's tricky action in releasing his own testimony brought about the swift publication of the whole record, with some security deletions.

Tricky Text and Tricky Tactics

If the transcript of the two hearings and the text of McNamara's prepared statement are now placed side by side, it is quite clear that he and Secretary Rusk and General Wheeler lied—there is no other word for it—to the Senate committees four years ago, and that McNamara is still trying hard to lie about it now. His whole performance is the shameful climax of what many had believed to be an honorable record as Secretary of Defense. He withheld from the committees then—and in his prepared statement tried to withhold from the public now—many crucial facts which cast doubt on the whole story of the Aug. 4 attack. You have to go from his tricky language to the Morse speech and to the hearing transcript to learn that three or four hours after the supposed attack, the task force commander on the Maddox cabled (see box top of this page) a warning that "freak weather," an "overeager sonarman" and the absence of any "visual sightings" cast doubt on the attack stories and called for "complete evaluation before any further action." No one would know from his accounts then or now that no debris had been found, though we claimed to have sunk two and possibly three enemy vessels, and that we ordered our retaliatory attack without waiting to learn the outcome of a belated order to search for debris.

You have to go back to that master of shyster lawyer language, John Foster Dulles, to match McNamara's performance. If an attack occurred, how is it that not a single captured North Vietnamese naval man, including one who was

*** Pentagon and State managed to tie up the transcript of the August 6, 1964, hearing in so many security snafus that it was not finally released until more than two years later, on Nov. 24, 1966—Thanksgiving Day when it was calculated to attract as little attention as possible.**

Bomb First—Check Later

Chairman Fulbright: We were . . . discussing . . . a message that had been sent by Commander Herrick of the task force [who was on board the Maddox]. It reads, "Review of action makes many recorded contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects and overeager sonarman may have accounted for many reports. NO ACTUAL VISUAL SIGHTINGS BY MADDOX [emphasis added]. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action." To pin it down again, when was that message sent?

Secretary McNamara: . . . Local time would have been around 1:30 a.m. Aug. 5.

Chairman Fulbright: Approximately 4 or 5 hours after the attack took place?

Secretary McNamara: Yes, perhaps 3 hours. . . .

Sen. Gore: Was this after the search for debris?

Secretary McNamara: Substantially before the search for debris. . . .

Sen. Gore: Did they find any debris?

Secretary McNamara: I do not believe so.

—Foreign Relations hearing Feb. 20

Since we claim to have sunk two and possibly three PT boats, it is strange that there was no debris. Less strange, perhaps, is that the retaliatory attack was ordered without waiting for any report on debris. A Pentagon insert at p. 58 of the hearing says "The instruction to search for debris was initiated at 5:11 p.m. EDT." The instruction might have been "initiated" at that time but committee records show that the actual order to locate debris did not go out until after 9 p.m. EDT Aug. 5 or three hours after the order to attack North Vietnam.

Not A Single North Vietnamese Naval Captive Had Ever Heard of an Aug. 4 Attack

"As a final point on this issue [whether an Aug. 4 attack actually occurred], U.S. naval forces in the three and one-half years which have elapsed since the August 1964 incidents have captured several North Vietnamese naval personnel. These personnel were extensively interrogated. One of these, captured in July 1966, stated that he had taken part in the 2 August 1964 attack on the Maddox, and his account of that attack coincided with our observations. He professed no knowledge of the 4 August attack and said that he believed that PT boats were not involved. His disclaimer of PT participation is contradicted by information received from a later captive. A North Vietnamese naval officer captured in July 1967 provided the name of the commander of a PT squadron. In intelligence reports received immediately after the 4 August attack, this Commander and his squadron were identified by name and number as participants."

—McNamara's prepared statement of Feb. 20. The latter part of this is a pretty feeble effort to get away from the fact that not a single captive had ever heard of what would have been for the North a famous naval encounter.

Now compare McNamara's version with the Navy's own report on prisoner interrogations as read into the record of the Senate hearing by Fulbright (p. 75 Feb. 20 hearing):

"Extensive interrogation of all potentially knowledgeable sources reveals they have no info concerning a NVN attack on U.S. ships on 4 August 1964. They stated definitely and emphatically that no PTS could have been involved. . . . The possibility that Swatows [McNamara testified these vessels carry no torpedoes and a footnote p. 75 says they were neither designed nor intended for use against larger ships] could have committed the Aug. 4 attack has also been carefully explored. Here, again, all sources disclaim any knowledge of such an attack . . . it is very possible that PT boat crews in general might not have heard of this attack since they apparently have little contact with other ship types. . . . On the other hand, source [deleted by Pentagon censor] obviously has travelled in higher circles and has proved himself exceptionally knowledgeable on almost every naval subject and event of interest. YET HE SPECIFICALLY AND STRONGLY DENIED THAT ANY ATTACK TOOK PLACE." [Emphasis added.]

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very cooperative (see box bottom of p. 2) denied knowledge of any such attack? How is it that Hanoi, which boasted of the Aug. 2 attack, has always denied the Aug. 4 attack? If Hanoi attacked on August 4, in the face of Johnson's warning after Aug. 2, how is it that its entire tiny fleet was caught by surprise in our retaliatory attack the next day? "Why," as North Vietnam asked in its own White Paper which has been kept from the U.S. public (see pages 4 and 5), "does this small country with its negligible naval forces embark on a systematic provocation of the U.S. 7th Fleet with its 125 vessels and 650 airplanes?" And then take no precautions against a counter-attack?

Familiar Military Habits

Fake incidents are hardly new in the history of military bureaucracies. The Japanese military staged one near Mukden in 1931 to begin its seizure of Manchuria despite parliamentary disapproval. The Pueblo incident illustrates another notorious military tactic: they play incidents up or down like an organist depending on whether they want to make or avoid war. Faked or exaggerated, the Tonkin incidents were used for a war buildup the White House and Pentagon wanted. The full truth is still hidden and we applaud Senator Gruening's demand that the staff study prepared by the Fulbright Committee be released. We are told that McNamara urged " a decisive commitment" in Vietnam on Johnson a few days after the Kennedy assassination. If the Foreign Relations committee digs further, it will find that both the bombing of the North and the commitment of combat troops to Vietnam were planned at the Pentagon several months before the Tonkin Gulf incidents, that the Tonkin Gulf resolution was prepared beforehand, and that the course pursued beginning in July, 1964, was calculated to create some kind of incident sooner or later, *to justify the expansion of the conflict already decided upon.* A Rostow Plan No. 6 for "PT-boat raids on North Vietnamese coastal installations and then by strategic bombing raids flown by U.S. pilots under either the U.S. or South Vietnamese flags" was disclosed in *Newsweek* as early as March 9, 1964. The coastal raids began in July, 1964, by vessels we supplied the South Vietnamese, with crews we trained, backstopped by intelligence our planes and ships provided. The collection of such information was the business of those "routine patrols" on which we sent our destroyers.

We cannot claim freedom of the seas for such missions. If Russian vessels backstopped Cuban naval attacks on Florida, we would take counter-action even if they stayed outside our 3-mile limit. There are no territorial limits in war, and this would be war. We merely compounded the offense and assured an "incident" by instructing our destroyers to ignore North Vietnam's 12-mile limit. Mc Namara in his prepared statement fell back on the disingenuous argument that we had no "official documentary" evidence of this 12-mile limit. Even the Geographer's Office at the State Department admitted to us in a telephone inquiry that it had always been assumed that North Vietnam's limit, like China's and North Korea's, was 12 miles. What was McNamara waiting for—an affidavit from Ho Chi Minh? Men who can so twist the truth are a menace to national security. In the pages of this special issue, as gleaned from the Senate hearings, Morse's speech and the North Vietnamese White Paper, one can begin to see what I believe will prove to be one of the great military frauds of world history, the curtain raiser for our disastrous Vietnamese adventure, which may easily and soon turn into a wider and nuclear war. There are no limits to what such leadership may cook up. Khesanh may provide the excuse.

What Was The Hurry?

Mr. Scali: In the light of the testimony, do you believe that Secretary McNamara took adequate precautions to check and double-check the cable from the Commander of the Task Force [quoted in the 1-col box on our p. 2] and to prove to himself, to his satisfaction at least that an attack did take place?

Sen. Fulbright: I do not . . . Why did we have to act immediately without taking time to evaluate it? . . . We were in no danger. No damage was being done.

—On ABC-TV's Issues and Answers Feb. 25

An Insider's Anonymous Letter Hints Reprisal Rushed to Meet LBJ's TV Deadline

"Getting the logs of the Maddox and the Turner Joy may be of some use to you in trying to get to the bottom of the Tonkin Gulf incident, but it really won't help much. What you most need is the record of events of communications passing through the national military command and control center. Most of them have probably now been destroyed. Whatever study was made on the basis of most of these records, fresh after the event, by the Weapons System Evaluation Group entitled 'Command and Control of the Tonkin Gulf Incident, 4-5 August 1964,' this document is Top Secret and it is very tightly held because it is based in part on the tape recordings of conversations over the phone of the President, the Secretary of Defense, Admiral Sharp and others during the period when the critical decisions were being made. . . .

"After the first report of the attack there was a report there probably had not been an attack at all. But the President was to go on the air to address the Nation about the retaliatory attacks that had already been planned, and after another flurry of confusion Admiral Sharp said there had been a real attack after all.

"At this point the Secretary of Defense decided to advise the President that the attack on the Turner Joy was real and to order the retaliatory attacks and go ahead with the speech because it was getting very late for the address to the Nation and, moreover, the retaliatory attack planes had been kept in a state of take-off readiness for the maximum time. . . . Because later events all indicate that the second attack was at best a trick of false radar images.

"I am sure if I signed this I would lose my job. . . . The Tonkin Gulf incident, upon the basis of which the resolution was so quickly obtained, was not a put-up job. But it was not the inexcusable and flagrant attack upon U. S. ships that it seemed to be, and that would have justified the resolution and retaliation had there been so. It was a confused bungle which was used by the President to justify a general course of action . . . advised by the military. . . .

"One of the things your committee should really look into is the constant use of security regulations to conceal the blunders and the connivings in the field of national security. But I doubt that all the power of the United States Senate could ever penetrate far enough into the supersecret world to learn much about what goes on. Right now the JCS is refusing materials in their field wanted by people working on Vietnam for the Secretary of Defense, most obviously because they are fearful it would serve the Secretary of Defense's purposes, not theirs."

—Inserted by Morse at pps. 84-5 of the Feb. 20 hearing

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From North Vietnam's White Paper on the Tonkin Gulf Incidents

We reprint here two portions of a White Paper issued by North Vietnam in September 1964 on the Tonkin Gulf incidents. Strangely enough neither I nor anyone else I know who gets material from Hanoi ever received it. This leads me to wonder whether postal authorities intercepted copies mailed to this country. The new Fulbright hearing discloses that North Vietnam's account, as given here, of the aggressive actions which preceded the incidents are closer to the truth than the official U.S. version. We also give in a box below North Vietnam's explanation of the second attack which it denies ever took place. Frankly we find Hanoi's explanation of the Aug. 4 incident incredible but so is so much of this strange affair.

According to the contentions of the White House and the Pentagon, U.S. destroyers have been subjected to "unprovoked attacks" by "North Vietnamese PT-boats" while on "routine patrols" in the Tonkin Gulf. In the light of facts and international law, such contentions are untenable. First of all, the United States has no right whatsoever to send warships "patrolling" along the coasts of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. For a long time now, the United States has sent part of the Seventh Fleet—totalling about 30 destroyers according to an AFP report of August 2, 1964—on continuous operations off the coasts of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It suffices for the American people to imagine a foreign fleet of 30 warships permanently "patrolling" in the Gulf of Mexico to realize how impudent and arrogant are the Johnson Administration's acts in the Gulf of Bac Bo.

As a matter of fact, those warships have frequently intruded into the territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. On August 8, 1964, U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance bluntly stated that "Washington did not recognize the limit of North Vietnam territorial waters as 12 miles. The United States", he said, "recognized a limit of 3 miles and American ships had received a formal order not to move inside this 3 mile-limit." (AFP Aug. 8, 1964.) The "American boats in the past had moved within 12 miles of the North Vietnam coast". This amounts to clear admission of U.S. intrusions into the territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

It was the destroyer Maddox which first opened fire on the patrol boats of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Vietnamese territorial waters on August 2, 1964. At midnight August 4, 1964 (local time), the U.S. Defense Secretary held a press conference in Washington, and gave a detailed account, according to the chronological order, about the two "attacks by North Vietnamese PT-boats". But he made absolutely no reference to the position and activities of the Maddox on July 31 and August 1, 1964. While asserting that on August 2, at 1230 (local time) the destroyer was 49 km from the coast, he gave no indication as to its position at 1508 (local time), when it was reportedly "attacked by 3 PT-boats".

As a matter of fact, on July 31 and August 1, the Maddox repeatedly intruded into Vietnamese waters, and threatened and provoked fishing boats in the area:

—At 0530 (local time), on July 31, it was sailing 5 miles off Vietnamese coasts, between Mui Doc and Hon Gio Island (belonging to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam). From the coast, its registration number 731 could already be seen clearly through binoculars.

—At 1430 (local time), on August 1, it chased three fishing boast south of Hon Mat Island, in Vietnamese waters.

—Finally, on August 2, at 1500 (local time), while sailing between Hon Me Island and Lach Truong, about 8 miles off the coast, the Maddox encountered and opened fire on Vietnamese patrol boats thus compelled to take a defensive action to drive the intruder off Vietnamese waters.

The United States is at a loss to give convincing evidence about the "second deliberate attack in the Tonkin Gulf" actually taking place.

As pointed out [below], the "second attack by North Vietnamese PT-boats" on the U.S.S. Maddox and the U.S.S. Turner Joy in the night of August 4, 1964 was but a farce staged by U.S. and South Vietnamese warships. That is the reason why the Pentagon was unable to produce any evidence to this effect.

In view of its being a sheer fabrication, the story presents many absurdities which cannot be explained.

During his August 4 press conference, McNamara referred to the Maddox reporting "radar contact with unidentified surface vessels", and stated that the "attack" took place in very bad weather conditions. He said, among other things

A Key Question Never Answered

Chairman Fulbright: How do you account for the fact that the North Vietnamese boasted of their attack on the Maddox Aug. 2 and yet vehemently denied there had been an incident Aug. 4?

Secretary McNamara: I cannot answer that question, Mr. Chairman. Their damage might have been greater on the 4th than it was on the 2d, I just do not know.

Fulbright: Do you have any idea, Gen. Wheeler?

Gen. Wheeler: I have no idea, Mr. Chairman.

—Foreign Relations hearing Feb. 20, 1968

North Vietnam Charges The Second Attack Was Simply A Staged Fabrication

"In the day and night of August 4, 1964 no naval craft of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was present in the area where the U.S. destroyers were allegedly 'attacked for a second time by North Vietnamese PT boats.'

"The alleged 'attack' was deliberately staged by the United States to have a pretext for carrying out its criminal designs against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

"According to reports from various sources, a task group of the Seventh Fleet including the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga and the destroyers Berkeley, Edison, Harry Hubbard, and Samuel Moore was cruising on a permanent basis in the South China Sea off Da Nang.

"On August 4, 1964 the Harry Hubbard met with the H.Q. 609 and H.Q. 11 of the South Vietnam Navy 60 kilometers off Da Nang. Thereafter, the South Vietnamese ships did not return to their base Tien Sa (Da Nang) as usual. In the same night, from 2000 to 2200, at about the time when 'North Vietnamese PT-boats' allegedly 'attacked the Maddox and the Turner Joy', gun shelling was heard, flares and planes were seen off the shores of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on international waters.

"That is what the Pentagon termed 'the second deliberate attack' on the destroyers Maddox and Turner Joy or 'the second Tonkin Gulf incident'."—*North Vietnam White Paper*

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A Background Account Hitherto Not Available In This Country

that at 2242 (local time) weather conditions and darkness "hampered the operations" of the covering aircraft, and that at 0032 on August 5, low clouds continued "to hamper the operations" of the Air Force.

Bad weather and complete darkness preventing the identification of the vessels, how then could it be asserted that they belonged to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam?

Many people queried: For what purpose should North Vietnamese vessels "attack" U.S. destroyers? Why does this small country with its negligible naval forces embark on a systematic provocation of the U.S. Seventh Fleet with its 125 vessels and 650 aeroplanes?

Again in view of its being an out-and-out fabrication, the story presents many loopholes:

—President Johnson said that following the August 2, 1964 "attack" in the Gulf of Bac Bo, he ordered the destroyer Turner Joy—then in the Philippines—to join the Maddox. In fact, at 1930 (local time) on August 2, the Turner Joy was already in the Gulf of Bac Bo, east of Deo Ngang. In other words, it must have received the relevant instructions prior to "the first attack" on the Maddox.

—President Johnson also said that following the "second attack" in the night of August 4, 1964, he ordered the aircraft carrier Constellation to sail to the Gulf of Bac Bo as reinforcement to the U.S. Navy there. Actually, the Constellation left Hong Kong in the morning of August 4, 1964. This was confirmed by its commander, Captain Frederic A. Bardshar at his August 10, 1964 press conference (*Reuter*, Aug. 10, 1964). In the evening of August 4, 1964, i.e. prior to the "second attack," the carrier was already in the Gulf of Bac Bo.

Judging by President Johnson's assertions, it would appear that the destroyer Maddox was the only U.S. warship in the Gulf of Bac Bo in the evening of August 2. As a matter of fact, four U.S. destroyers were operating at that time along North Vietnamese coasts, namely the Maddox, the Turner Joy, the Samuel Moore and the Berkeley.

In the evening of August 4 and prior to the "second attack," 11 U.S. warships belonging to the Seventh Fleet were already on the spot: Ticonderoga task group with the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga, destroyers Samuel Moore, Edison, Harry Hubbard and Berkeley; Constellation task group with the aircraft carrier Constellation, destroyers Preston and Fechteler, and the U.S.S. Gridley; and finally the two destroyers Maddox and Turner Joy.

According to President Johnson's August 4, 1964 statement, the air strike against North Viet Nam was decided following the "second attack" on U.S. warships in the Gulf of Bac Bo.

But, according to the Reuter correspondent who attended the August 10, 1964 press conference aboard a ship of the Seventh Fleet, the pilot of an A-4 jet based on the carrier Constellation—whose name was not given—said that the pilots were informed of the attack against North Viet Nam back in the morning of August 4, that is in the evening of August 3 (Washington time). [Emphasis added.]

To justify its war act, the United States has embarked on a large-scale diplomatic move.

Pursuant to the U.S. plan and at U.S. request, on August 5, the UN Security Council held a special meeting to hear U.S. permanent representative Adlai Stevenson give an account of the "Tonkin Gulf incidents."

The August 5, 1964 air raid was not an isolated action: on the contrary, it came in the wake of a series of other U.S. war acts against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam: shelling of Hon Ngu and Hon Me Islands, bombing and strafing of Nam Can and Noong De, shelling of Ron and Deo Ngang, provocations by the Maddox in Vietnamese territorial waters from July 31 to August 2, 1964.

Fatuous Reply to A Searching Question

Chairman Fulbright: Gen. Wheeler told us during the Aug. 6 hearing [in 1964] that the North Vietnamese patrol boats were found dead in the water at their base as the U.S. aircraft attacked. If the North Vietnamese had actually attacked the Maddox and Turner Joy, why would they leave offensive patrol craft tied up at the docks without any alert?

Gen. Wheeler: I suppose they presumed since we had not retaliated against them after the first attack on Maddox that we would not retaliate when they had a second attack, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Well, I remember from your testimony it strikes me that they are extraordinarily stupid. If after having attacked at approximately 9, 10 o'clock in the evening that all those boats are in their berths only a few miles, 60 miles away without any alert at all, sitting there quite vulnerable to destruction.

—Feb. 20, 1968 hearing

Evidence from American Sources Which Supports North Vietnam's Charges

"The U.S.-North Vietnamese clashes [in Tonkin Gulf] had been preceded by sharp U.S.-South Vietnamese debate in July on whether to extend the war to North Vietnam.

"U.S. Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor met with Premier Nuguyen Khanh in Saigon July 23 and reportedly said that recent South Vietnamese pronouncements and threats of carrying the war beyond South Vietnam's borders were contrary to U.S. policy.

"Taylor also was said to have expressed displeasure with a statement that had been made by Vietnamese Air Commodore Nguyen Cao Ky at a Saigon news conference July 22. Ky had said his air force was ready to launch bombing attacks against North Vietnam immediately. Ky also said that for the past 3 years South Vietnamese 'combat teams' had carried out combat raids inside North Vietnam by 'air, sea and land.' Ky asserted that more Vietnamese pilots and infiltration teams were being trained for combat missions against North Vietnam. During their meeting, Taylor and Khanh were said to have reprimanded Ky. Khanh was said to have assured Taylor that the U.S. and South Vietnam's war policy were basically the same, that their differences centered only on timing and on what to announce publicly."

—Facts on File, p. 250, Aug. 5, 1964.

Senator Carlson. Press reports indicate there is a continuous infiltration of Southern Vietnamese into North Vietnam. [Deleted.]

Secretary McNamara. This is such a highly classified subject, Senator Carlson, it is difficult for me to answer your question fully.

Senator Carlson. I will not ask you to discuss it then.

—Senate Tonkin Gulf Hearing, Aug. 6, 1964

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Morse in A Hard-Hitting Speech Adds Up McNamara's Mistatements

By Senator Wayne Morse *

I have no intention of letting the Secretary of Defense go out of office on the assumption that the testimony he gave either on August 6, 1964, or yesterday represents accurate testimony in many particulars. I want to say that I speak with great sadness for I have exceedingly high regard for the Secretary of Defense. I think he is one of the most brilliant men in public life that I have ever known.

Mr. President, on August 6, 1964, the Secretary of Defense said before the Committee on Foreign Relations: "The Maddox was operating in international waters, was carrying out a routine patrol. . . ." That was a misstatement. The Maddox was a spy ship at that time under instruction to stimulate the electronic instruments of North Vietnam to carry out a spying activity. That is not a routine patrol for a destroyer.

Going back to his statement of August 6, 1964: "It [the Maddox] was not informed of, was not aware of, had no evidence of, and so far as I know today has no knowledge of any South Vietnamese actions in connection with the two islands [attacked in Tonkin Gulf] that Senator Morse referred to." He is dead wrong. What do the facts show? With respect to the Navy's knowledge of South Vietnam's operation against North Vietnam, first, on July 15, 1964, in approving the patrol of the Maddox, the Joint Chiefs cautioned the naval commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet that "activity in 34-A operations has increased."

Keep in mind that "34-A operations" is the identification mark for the South Vietnamese bombing boats fully equipped by the United States, with a staff trained by the U.S. Navy. Our Navy was not only well aware of the fact that those boats were going up to bomb those two islands 3 to 6 miles from the coast of North Vietnam, but our Navy was in constant contact with the operation and knew what was taking place step by step.

There is this message, for example, sent out to the naval commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet [July 15, 1964]:

"Activity in 34-A operations has increased. These 34-A operations consisted of South Vietnamese patrol craft (the crafts supplied by the United States, and with United States trained crews) bombarding for the first time North Vietnamese shore installations."

Early in the morning of August 4, 1964, the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet cabled the Maddox and in that cable pointed out: "The above patrol will: (a) clearly demonstrate our determination to continue these operations; (b) possibly draw NVN (North Vietnamese Navy) PGMS (Patrol Boats) to northward away from area of 34-A ops; (c) eliminate DeSoto [name of Maddox patrol] patrol interference with 34-A ops."

Why, it was a decoy operation. That is what that message means. You follow the course that will draw the North Vietnamese Navy northward and eastward away from the direction of the bombing of the islands of North Vietnam by the South Vietnamese boats equipped by the United States. The Secretary yesterday says that the torpedo attacks were some 2 days after the bombing of the islands. What would cause anyone to believe that the North Vietnamese knew what any terminal dates for our operations were? The ships were still in the area. Why should she think there were not going to be further bombardments?

We still do not know whether the plan was just to bomb those two islands or continue other bombardments. I do not think we will ever know.

On August 2 and August 4, U.S. vessels were in international waters when the alleged incidents occurred. Patrol instructions issued in January 1964, in part were as follows: "The closest approach to the Chicom coast is 15 nautical miles. The closest point of approach to the North Vietnamese coast is 8 miles. CPA to the North"—that is, the closest point of approach—"to the North Vietnamese islands is 4 miles."

If we hold to the point of view that we were bound only by a 3-mile limit, our ships were always in international waters. But, do not forget that there is another point of view of the enemy, namely they do not recognize the 3-mile limit. They take the position—the Secretary of Defense disputed it yesterday, but I think the record is perfectly clear—that North Vietnam along with China insists on a 12-mile limit. Under

* **Abridged from his speech in the Senate Feb. 21.**

Pentagon Leaks to Morse

"As I said yesterday in the committee meeting in the presence of the Secretary of Defense, I did not speak on the floor of the Senate on August 5 and August 6 [1964] without having some information to justify my making some of the comments I made. I served on the Armed Services Committee for years. I still have very close contact with highly reliable people. I had a call from the Pentagon Building before I made the first speech, suggesting that I ask for the logs. And I asked for them in the speech. The call also suggested that I seek to find out what the Maddox was doing, because she was not on a routine patrol mission, but was acting as a spy ship."

—Morse in the Senate, Feb. 21

Morse Says As A Spyship The Maddox Could Not Claim Normal Legal Rights

"I think we have never come to grips with what we were doing long before the 2d and 4th, long before the incidents of Tonkin Bay. The fact that we had this kind of presence there, that we were stimulating the electronic devices of the North Vietnamese, that we were carrying on intelligence operations was wrong.

"The Maddox was on this occasion a spyship and quite a different body of international law applies to spy activities than applies to other activities. I don't think we should have been there and especially under those circumstances when the Navy and the administration knew that South Vietnamese naval vessels that we had furnished and the personnel that we had trained were on their way in that period of time to bombard North Vietnam and its two islands. The Maddox and the Turner Joy were in the area despite all our talks about distances. The fact is that the North Vietnamese had no reason to believe that we were trying to keep separate the South Vietnamese boat operations and our patrols. I think it would be a very reasonable conclusion if they thought there was a connection. I happen to think there was a very clear connection."

—Morse at the McNamara hearing Feb. 20.

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What McNamara Hid From the Senate and the Country Four Years Ago

the circumstances, with the shelling taking place on North Vietnamese islands, with this kind of activity on the part of our destroyer, which was not a routine patrol, that that constituted an act of constructive aggression on the part of the United States. It constituted picking a fight.

That was really the beginning of the escalation into North Vietnam. I would have the American people remember that, as I said back in my speech of August 5, 1964, and August 6, 1964 that prior to the Gulf of Tonkin incident the administration did not produce witnesses before the Committee on Foreign Relations who testified about any infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam. That infiltration began after the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

After the attack on the Maddox on August 2, the Navy was authorized to continue "routine patrols" in the Gulf of Tonkin and to double the force by adding an additional destroyer the Turner Joy—to the patrol. At the same time, the State Department delivered a note of protest to the North Vietnamese Government. The note concluded with the statement that the North Vietnamese should be under no misapprehension "as to the grave consequences which would inevitably result from any further unprovoked offensive military action against the U.S. forces."

After the incident of August 4, Secretary McNamara told the committee that the destroyers had come under continuous torpedo attack and that they had sunk two of the attacking craft. He gave us no information as to the conflicting points of view even in the military, to say nothing about conflicting points of view elsewhere.

Secretary McNamara testified that—"Deliberate and unprovoked nature of the attacks at locations that were indisputably in international waters compelled the President and his principal advisers to conclude that prompt and firm military response was required."

The attacks were all over, whatever they were, whatever their type. The Maddox and the Turner Joy were in no danger then. And, of course, what would reason and dedication to peaceful pursuit of the settlement of disputes have called upon the administration to do at that time?

Well, to move further out into international waters, until we got the matter before a tribunal that would have the jurisdiction and the authority to adjudicate it. That was the duty.

"Here you are with islands 3 to 6 miles away, being bombarded by the South Vietnamese, and then you look out and you see two U.S. destroyers not too far away, stimulating the electronic instruments of North Vietnam, causing great alarm and concern on their part; moving to the east and north away from the area of the bombardment. If one is a North Vietnamese, what would he think? He would not think that those boats were on a pleasure tour. This was a provocative patrol, and the North Vietnamese knew it."

—Morse in the Senate, Feb. 21

Instead, we had a visceral reaction. We bombed. The greatest military power on earth, the greatest firepower on earth, the greatest Navy, the greatest Air Force, the greatest ground force—we just had to show this little upstart, North Vietnam, that we were going to knock out some of their patrol boat bases.

Although the original plan called for the termination after 2 days of the runs of the ships into the Vietnam coast, the commander in chief of the Pacific ordered an extension of the patrol telling the ships that a termination after only 2 days "does not in my view adequately demonstrate the United States' resolve to assert our legitimate rights in these international waters."

The patrol of the Maddox and Turner Joy was coordinated with operations of the South Vietnamese against North Vietnam. These operations took place on the night of August 3-4. The operation included the bombardment of North Vietnamese radar sites and a security post. The U.S. commanders knew, moreover, that the North Vietnamese considered the patrol of the two ships as part of this South Vietnamese operation. Nevertheless, despite this knowledge that North Vietnamese considered the U.S. patrol as part of an attack on North Vietnam, the patrol continued.

As for the second incident itself, Mr. McNamara told the committee that there was no doubt that the attack on the Maddox and the Turner Joy had taken place as described. He even told the committee that two North Vietnamese PT boats had been destroyed. His testimony gave no indication that there was any doubt as to what had occurred. The reports, however, show that as the hours went by after the second incident there was increasing concern that the attack may not have

Why So Extensive A Series of Reprisals When Our Ships Were Not Even Damaged?

Chairman Fulbright: Why did the U.S. consider it necessary to retaliate against North Vietnam in a manner so completely disproportionate to the offense? . . . Why did we not protest to the International Control Commission as the North Vietnamese did on July 31, two days before the first incident, when Hanoi formally protested attack on its islands?

Secretary McNamara: Because the International Control Commission has a record of failure in investigating incidents of this kind. . . .

Senator Gore: . . . The Administration was hasty, acted precipitately, inadvisably, unwisely, out of proportion to the provocation in launching 64 bombing attacks on North Vietnam out of a confused, uncertain situation on a murky night, which one of the sailors described as dark as the knob of hell; and particularly, five hours after the task force commander had cabled that he doubted that there were any attacks, and recommended that no further action be taken until it was thoroughly canvassed. . . .

Senator Pell: I must say I agree with Senator Gore in his point that the retaliation seems large in proportion to the offense. I know from the old rules of land warfare that if you are engaged in hostilities or occupying a country, the rule of thumb given to a commanding officer is that you can retaliate ten to one. At least that is what we were taught in World War II. It seemed to me that in these two attacks, one definite and one quite possible, we suffered no damage. Therefore why did we feel we had to retaliate on the basis of almost infinity from the viewpoint of the damage we suffered?

Secretary McNamara: Well . . . the crime was not measured by the amount of damage done. It was measured by the violation of our right to navigate freely on the high seas.

—Senate Foreign Relations Committee Feb. 20

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If the Senate Had Known The Truth About the Tonkin Incidents

taken place at all. I think it did, but there was such little objective evidence immediately available that there was doubt.

On August 4 the destroyers reported that they were under continuous attack. Within the next few hours messages came from the Maddox and Turner Joy describing the attack. For example, at 11:15 a.m. the Turner Joy reported that five torpedoes had been fired and the ship was planning to ram one of the PT boats.

Do not forget that PT boats carry only two torpedoes. In fact, there is great doubt in the record as to whether they can pin down more than one, although some of the information given us was that allegedly 22 torpedoes had been fired.

Another report was transmitted that seven torpedoes had already been fired at the destroyers, and two were in the water. The Turner Joy reported, "We think a PT boat sunk one of its own boats." Then a message arrived that the ships had counted 22 torpedoes fired.

It was primarily on the basis of this information that the administration set in motion the process that would lead to the attack on North Vietnam some 10 hours later. It should be noted that 2 days later, on August 6, when Secretary McNamara brought the account of the second incident to the committee he gave no indication that there were second thoughts as to what really happened in the Gulf of Tonkin. He was positive and unequivocal.

Nevertheless, within a few hours after the Maddox and Turner Joy had reported that attacks had broken off, doubts began to grow. In another message the operational commander aboard the Maddox reported that the Maddox itself had scored no known hits and never positively identified a boat as such. He reported that "the first boat to close the Maddox probably fired a torpedo at the Maddox which was heard but not seen. All subsequent Maddox torpedo reports are doubtful in that it is suspected that sonar man was hearing ship's own propeller beat."

The commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, only a few hours before the retaliatory airstrike on North Vietnam, sent a telegram to the operational commander of the Maddox and Turner Joy as follows: "(1) Can you confirm absolutely that you were attacked? (2) Can you confirm sinking of PT boats? (3) Desire reply directly supporting evidence."

Morse Predicts A War Crimes Trial

"Mr. President, eventually they will try us. Remember what the senior Senator from Oregon says on the floor of the Senate today when, in the years ahead, we get tried in an international tribunal for our course of action in Vietnam. We will be found guilty for that course of action in bombing those PT bases without ever attempting to get the incidents settled by way of international law."

—Morse in the Senate, Feb. 21

Over the next few hours the demands for confirming information and evidence mounted. Finally, the commander of the 7th Fleet asked the Turner Joy to amplify urgently its reports. The following is from the cable: "Who were witnesses, what is witness reliability?—Most important that present evidence substantiating type and number of attacking forces be gathered and disseminated."

Well, after the message of the commander of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Moorer, urgently asking for the information, the President appeared on television to announce that the strikes against North Vietnam had commenced.

As I have already said, I do not think the strikes can ever be justified. I do not think that at that time there was any need to go to the self-defense of the Republic. There was a need to meet with the Security Council, and fast.

So, when we take the whole record—and I have only given a few incidents, but I have given enough which, under the doctrine of personal privilege, I am entitled to do, to answer the Secretary of Defense's reference to me—I want to say that in my judgment the Secretary of Defense misled the committee in August 1964.

I want to say that the Secretary of Defense and the administration, including the President of the United States, owed it to Congress and to the people of this country to tell us much more about what preceded the alleged—and I think it happened, in the first incident at least—attack on the Maddox.

Had they done it, I just have a feeling in my bones that the Tonkin Gulf joint resolution would not have passed. Do not forget, there is a very interesting other chapter to that resolution which I will not take the time to go into today. It was drafted before the incident.

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We Began To Expose The Tonkin Gulf Affair Four Years Ago

As readers of the WEEKLY know, we began to expose the discrepancies in the Johnson Administration's account of the Tonkin Gulf incidents the week after they occurred. Two of those earlier pieces and new revelations I published in a 3-part study of Senator Fulbright for the NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS are reprinted in my new book, "In A Time of Torment" (Random House) available to readers of the WEEKLY at $6.95 or $1 less than the publication price. You can still get a copy if you send a check for $6.95 with your name and address to the WEEKLY at 5618 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington 20015. New readers seeing this paper for the first time can subscribe by sending $5 to the same address. Don't forget your zip code.

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